



NNADV

Advocating change.
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Policy Brief: Teen and Young Adult Dating Violence

Summary of the Teen Dating Violence

Discussions around intimate partner violence typically focus on adult relationships. This is not surprising, given that [one in four](#) women will experience abuse in her lifetime. What is not as widely known however is that according to [loveisrespect.org](#), “one in three adolescents in the U.S. is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse from a dating partner, a figure that far exceeds rates of other types of youth violence”. Further, “girls and young women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence — almost triple the national average”.

Experiencing dating violence can put youth at [greater risk](#) of things like eating disorders, risky sexual behavior and experiencing domestic violence later in life. Youth may not recognize that their partner is being abusive and may be fearful to talk with their parents or seek help. They may also have little or no experience with healthy dating relationships and feel conflicted because they are in love. Leaving a violent relationship is the most dangerous time for a victim. This is one of the many reasons victims stay with abusive partners. It is important that youth are educated about teen dating violence and that peers, parents and school staff are also able to recognize the signs. It is never a victim’s fault for being abused and only with support and education can we end this cycle. Many of those committing violence against another are also experiencing violence at home and feel that this behavior is the way to show love. Beginning with age appropriate information when they are young can help prevent these youth from becoming violent toward their partner or being a victim of violence in the future.

Public Policy Intervention

Several schools in Nevada provide education to their students about teen dating violence, however, more is needed. Legislators and community advocates recognized the importance of this education in the 2015 legislative session by passing Senate Bill 394. This bill requires that by 2020, all schools in Nevada must provide K-12 education about both domestic and sexual abuse prevention. This mandate includes developing standards in 2016 to help guide the information that students will receive. This is a great start to ensure that all students in Nevada receive strong education on this common but preventable experience. Many community organizations and programs are ready and willing to partner with schools to share this information.

In addition to the efforts of this important bill, talking with policy makers about teen dating violence and the need for education is essential. Generating this conversation with lawmakers will encourage a cultural shift where violence is no longer seen as a private issue and every Nevadan will understand that we all have a role to play in stopping violence and protecting our young adults. These conversations should include information on warning signs, resources for victims and those abusing and ways to listen and not blame a victim. Visit [nnadv.org](#) for more information.